

Three performances to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Tong Tik-sang's death

Cantonese opera virtuosos, in "A Showcase of Cantonese Operas by Tong Tik-sang", will perform three selected works from Tong Tik-sang, namely "All Because of a Smile", "The Dream Meeting between Emperor Wu of Hon and Lady Wei" and "Madame Wild Rose" in September to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Tong's death.

Performing virtuosos will include Loong Koon-tin, Nam Fung, Chan Hung-chun, Lui Hung-kwong, Chan Ka-ming and Sun Kim-long. Details of the performances are as follows:

September 2 (Monday), 7.30pm
Auditorium, Tsuen Wan Town Hall
Programme: "All Because of a Smile"
Tickets: \$140 to \$280

Synopsis: Fan Bingning is a prized housemaid in the residence of Jinan governor Wen Shoulian. At the marriage proposal of the high-born Yang Yuelou, Shoulian releases her to marry while he weds Yan Xijiao at his mother's behest. Yuelou's uncle, Daomang, a greedy gambler, kills Yuelou for money and implicates Bingning. At the trial, the judge is Shoulian. Delighted at seeing her former master, Bingning breaks into a smile. Daomang uses the smile as an excuse to smear Bingning of adultery, and bringing pressure from the military chief to bear, forces Shoulian to indict Bingning and put her in prison, pending death. Bingning gives birth to a son in prison and places the baby under Shoulian's care, hoping her son will clear her name and redress his father's untimely death when he grows up. The disaffected Shoulian resigns from office in order to bring up baby Xiaolou. Eighteen years later...

September 3 (Tuesday), 7.30pm
Auditorium, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing
Programme: "The Dream Meeting between Emperor Wu of Hon and Lady Wei"
Tickets: \$140 to \$320

Synopsis: Wei Ziqing is a songstress at a prince's palace. Her brother Wei Qing, a slave charged with taking care of the horses, is in love with the widowed Princess Pingyang. In order to free her lover from servitude, the Princess plots with Dongfang Shuo to arrange a romantic meeting between Ziqing and Emperor Wu, who is on his way to a sacrificial ritual. Ziqing is conferred the title of Lady Wei and is inducted into the palace to seek an audience with the Empress Dowager. The jealous Empress Chen secretly summons her brother to kill Ziqing but he fails. Emperor Wu sends Wei Qing to lead a military expedition to the west. Ziqing lives in confinement in Changmen, where the Emperor visits her in secret and is delighted to learn that she is pregnant by him. But the situation turns when the news is unfortunately leaked to the Empress...

September 7 (Saturday), 7.30pm
Auditorium, Tuen Mun Town Hall
Programme: "Madame Wild Rose"
Tickets: \$140 to \$260

Synopsis: To outsiders, Dou Mei (Wild Rose) and her elder brother Pihai make their living selling swords and keeping a tavern, but in fact, they steal their guests' swords, which Pihai tweaks and sells them for new. Three years ago, Wild Rose and the Crown Prince Zhu Erkui were lovers, and she had given him a sword as gift. Later, Erkui's uncle Zhu Yunwen ascends the throne. He travels incognito to visit the Dou brother and sister, with the purpose of bringing them to live in the palace. When Erkui returns from his expedition, he believes that Yunwen has usurped his throne and seized his beloved. He vents his fury by wreaking havoc in the imperial court. Empress Dowager Pan wants to kill Erkui, but Yunwen saves his life by pretending to insult him and sends him into exile. Erkui invades the State of Yan, and after a number of mishaps, becomes first the consort to Princess Ma Yu'e, before becoming King of Yan. He leads an army southwards and kills indiscriminately, to the misery of his people...

"A Showcase of Cantonese Operas by Tong Tik-sang" is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Tickets are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_845.html.

A pre-performance talk and a post-performance talk (in Cantonese) will be held. The pre-performance talk will be held at 7.30pm on August 7 (Wednesday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. It will include speakers Loong Koon-tin and Sun Kim-long. The post-performance talk will be held at 2.30pm on September 8 (Sunday) at AC1, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Speakers for this talk include Loong Koon-tin and Nam Fung. Admission is free with limited seats available on a first-come, first-served basis.